

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO JOHN.

John the Baptist was born A. D. 4. about six months before our Saviour. His childhood days were spent in the wilderness where he was eagerly pursuing and probably making preparations for the great work lying before him. He makes himself known by his preaching in the regions of the Jordan. So great and powerful were his sermons that multitudes gathered around him to hear his words. The long looked for, the Messiah and the profound preaching of John caused many to repent and turn from their evil ways. Even so much that they inquired whether he was the Christ, but in honest words he answered I am not. But let us go a step farther, let us consider the testimonies of Christ concerning John. When the Saviour comes to him to be baptized his heart fails him, in the most humblest tones he says "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me." Scarcely could he yield to administer the rite to one so much greater than he. But listen to the approval of Christ, "Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." John indeed opens the way but Christ completes it; and thus while he is engaged in proclaiming his mission in the world, cheering the broken hearted, bringing joy and happiness to the afflicted, he is again called on to testify for John. As the messengers who was sent from John to Christ with the inquiry as to whether he was indeed the Christ or whether they should look for another, when these had departed, Christ most beautifully testifies to the character of John, consider the words of the Saviour as found in our lesson.

What went ye out into the wilderness for to see. A reed shaken with the wind? Did you expect to find a man who was undecided as to what he was doing? Did you expect to find a man who lived sumptuously, in whom was lying that undecided character which can easily be changed to suit some other men's opinion.

See how nobly he defends the character and reputation of him who was at this time in prison, bearing persecution, awaiting the execution for the cause he was defending. Yea, how many to-day consider the blessed Saviour, a "reed"

one who was no more than a mere man. How long shall we lay quiet and suffer the testimonies which we can render to promote the cause of Christ? There is in this subject an important thought and one which you my brethren and you my sisters should consider. Should we not always seek to elevate and guard the reputation of our brethren and friends. Let us take them by the hand and make them to feel that we count them a brother or sister in the fullest sense. Once more we recall the testimony of Christ to John, "Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Brother, is the way clear before thy face? Is there any obstacles in your way? Is there anything to hinder a free intercourse between you and your master? If so, take it to Jesus who is able to remove all hinderances.

How many today who ought to be living witnesses to the world, who ought to stand firm on the apostolic platform and let their light shine that others may see their good works and thereby be led to also witness to the things of God. While on the other hand they are "reeds" pitched to and fro by every wind of doctrine, yea, and are often ready to compromise the plain inspired word of God. Once more we must appeal to the greatest testimony of Christ in behalf of John. For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Truly an example that is worth imitating, may be drawn from these testimonies, and may we not in every possible way seek to remove all wrong impressions which we may hear concerning our friends, seek to encourage, to hold up, and bear one another's burdens. John opened the way. Christ and the Apostles laid the foundation, and now it remains for us to build on that foundation, let us lay the walls deep, procure good material, frame it together well, unto the sure word of God, that when the storms, and tempests of life shall try it, we can rest assured that it will stand, and thus leave a monument behind that may be worthy of being followed by others. A monument that will testify when our earthly labors are brought to a close and our voices are silent, only awaiting the reward which our blessed Redeemer has promised to all who obey his words.

AN ALLEGORY.

According to Webster, an allegory is a story in which the literal or direct meaning, is not the real or principle one. I presume all Bible students are acquainted with the recorded experience of Nebuchadnezzar's sojourn among the beasts of the field, and his subsequent restoration to his kingdom.

I believe it to be a good illustration of the course of the human race, from Paradise lost, to Paradise regained, in other words, it is an "allegory."

Let us view it as such, and note its agreement with the scriptures of truth, and human experience. Nebuchadnezzar describes his dream thus—"I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, the tree was great and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the beasts of the field had shelter under it and the fowls of the air dwelt in its branches." This is a figurative description of Adam prior to his fall, when he had direct communion with God, symbolized by the tree reaching to heaven, and also had authority over the lower creation. And behold a watcher an Holy one came down from heaven, He cried with a loud voice and said thus, "hew down the tree and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit, let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches."

The Holy watcher may refer to God or his mandate, expelling man from the garden, because of disobedience.

The tree striped of its leaves and branches could not afford shelter and protection to the lower creation and well represents man striped of his garments of innocence, power and purity, thenceforth to rule the beasts by physical force, instead of by the power of his presence and word.

The hewing down of the tree may represent the physical or bodily desolation of man in death, where he would lie prone and life-less upon the ground like the fallen tree.

The dream continues and says, "nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, * * * * * and let his heart be changed from man's and let a beast's heart be given him."

Man after his fall and expulsion from